

CONSIDERATIONS
ON THE
PRESENT STATE
OF
AFFAIRS
IN
GREAT-BRITAIN.



LONDON:

Printed for J. ROBERTS near the Oxford Arms in
Warwick-Lane. MDCCKVIII.

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ON THE

Present State of AFFAIRS.

IT is Matter of just wonder and surprize to all, who have not Opportunities of seeing Things otherwise than according to their outward Appearances, how it comes to pass, that the present Situation of Affairs should not shew a more favourable Aspect. It would have been impossible about two Years ago, to perswade any thinking Person to believe, that after crushing a formidable open Rebellion, and enjoying for a considerable time the Fruits of Peace, our Enemies could be in a Condition to awaken our Fears, and make us still dread them. But so true it is, that HIS MAJESTY judges it worthy of his particular Notice to his Parliament, and their serious Consideration, appealing, as it were, to the Consciences of his People, and warning them of the great Dangers they are at present exposed to, in the following Words of HIS MAJESTY's most excellent Speech, at the opening of the present Session of Parliament.

You cannot but be sensible of the many Attempts which have been set on Foot to disturb the Peace of Europe, and of these Kingdoms. They only pretend not to see, who are not afraid of them.

It must needs create very Melancholy Reflections in the Minds of all loyal Britons, to consider the unnatural Opposition of many to the true Interest of their Country; and that Clogs are industriously thrown in HIS MAJESTY's Way, to retard the most glorious Design,
that

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that can possibly inspire the Breast of a Prince, *the Security and Ease of his People*; but more especially that HIS MAJESTY should have cause to complain of the Indolence and Lukewarmness of any, who *pretend not to see*—

By what Management the publick Peace and Tranquility of the Nation continues so much upon Suspence, and daily receives new Disturbances, is a Thing that deserves the Parliament's serious Enquiry; that so it may be resolv'd what Methods are proper to be taken for obviating and disappointing the various *Artifices of our Enemies either at Home or Abroad*, and for establishing our future Welfare and Safety upon solid and lasting Foundations. The most skilful Physician cannot, before he be, at least, well inform'd of the State of his Patient, administer an infallible Cure: So likewise, in vain do we hope to find effectual Remedies for our many National Distempers, till their Nature and Origin are clearly understood and consider'd.

There are many Things which conspire at this Time to keep our Island in a weak and fluctuating Condition: I shall begin with some of the most obvious (though they are none of the least dangerous) Symptoms, and so proceed to the Consideration of some others of a more secret Nature.

The first Thing which deserves to be seriously consider'd, and that justly raises the Indignation and Abhorrence of honest Men, is, the vile and intolerable Abuse of HIS MAJESTY'S Clemency to his Rebellious and Traiterous Subjects: which far from answering its chief Design, *viz. to reclaim them*, has been improv'd to quite contrary Purposes. It was in HIS MAJESTY'S Power to have humbled his Enemies effectually, and finally disabled them, their Friends or Posterity from doing any farther Mischiefs. Yet this did not suit with HIS MAJESTY'S innate Goodness, and compassionate Temper of Soul, which inclin'd him to milder Measures, such as, it was hop'd, would have created Gratitude, Remorse, and Repentance. But

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how miserably are we mistaken! Are they not rather harden'd in Disloyalty, and strengthen'd in their wicked Principles and Resolutions?

If such must needs be the infallible Consequences of Royal Clemency, I confess, I for my part would declare against it; for this were to make the Innocent suffer for the guilty, and to countenance instead of discouraging the worst of Crimes. I do not love to exaggerate Matters. I have my self been a stout Advocate for Mercy, when every body's Mouth was full of the same; but then I believ'd a better Use would be made of it than what I now see. I know likewise the Disadvantage a Man is liable to in his Character, who argues in any other strain; for People will scarce allow a Medium in this Case. But is not this a notorious Wrong in Politicks? Every vulgar Capacity must own, that the one Extreme is as horrible and dreadful as the other. 'Tis a common Saying, That 'tis pity fair Weather should do any harm. I'm sure 'tis so in Government, whose greatest and most charming Attribute is Clemency. But if this is bestow'd too liberally, Malefactors will become insolent, they will be inclin'd to think the Government looks upon it self to stand upon Courtesy, that it is precarious, and dares not take notice of the most open Affronts.

I shall not insist on Particulars, as to the Growth of Disaffection in this Nation: We all know, that ever since the Rebellion it has been daily increasing instead of abating in any measure; and that this is chiefly owing to the Conduct of those very Men, who through HIS MAJESTY'S unparallel'd Favour, or by indirect Means, have escap'd the Justice due to their Demerits. This is particularly remarkable in *Scotland*, where they use all manner of Artifices to corrupt and debauch the Minds of the People, and to incense them against HIS MAJESTY'S Government; and where the Infection is now become so universal, that as the same cannot escape the Observation of every one, who knows any thing

of the present Posture of Affairs in that Country ; so I am persuaded the Parliament will not think this a light matter. Methinks the Government ought to have the strictest Eye to that Place, where the late Rebellion began, and which, by its great Distance from their View, is not only a Sanctuary to many outlaw'd Rebels, but the fittest Country for hatching and bringing to Maturity some of the new Attempts that, as HIS MAJESTY tells us, *are set on foot to disturb the Peace of these Kingdoms.*

In the next place, Our virulent Factions at home have contributed in a very great measure to the Success and Encouragement of our Enemies, and to the Increase of that Force, which is now again become formidable. 'Tis a miserable Circumstance, and the general Ruin of prosperous States, when Parties, out of separate Interests and Passions, pursue different Ends of their own, without regard to the Publick, altho' the chief Interest of each : But it is a Circumstance beyond common Misery, a Propensity to Ruin more than natural, and a Fatality on Mankind greater than has been ever observ'd perhaps in any Country or Set of Men, that they should be divided into Parties from the publick Interest, when there is not so much as any real particular Interest, in effect, carrying on in any of those different Parties ; nor any of these discriminating Interests so laid, or so pursu'd, as that, by all the violent Steps taken by the Engagers, they are any ways advanc'd. So that altho' Violence be done, and is still doing perpetually to the Publick ; tho' all contend for the Promotion of that Interest or Party, under which they only look for any Happiness : Yet for all this, not one of those Parties are likely to procure or come any thing near their End.

Our Nation must be allow'd to be in a most compleat way to Misery, if this be prov'd their Case.

That there are Parties, 'tis well known.

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The first great Division is between King GEORGE and the Pretender. Of these two Interests, that of the Pretender does properly make but one Party, tho' the other two. Those, I say, make but one Party, as they act in the Publick; for they having in prospect only, and as the End of all their Agitations, the Government of the Pretender; they are not now divided, nor can be yet, whilst unprevailing, in any Dispute or Difference considerable about Administration, as how, by whom, or in what Methods, favouring one or other Party, that Government shall be carry'd on. But (I mention it with Regret) there are, as I said, on the side of the Government (at least who pretend so) two Parties, that pull different Ways in the publick Affairs.

There are some Persons, whom I would fain look upon as Friends still, tho' they may be grown cooler upon some melancholy Reflections, as if their Deserts were not enough taken notice of, nor their Services rewarded. The Notion they have entertain'd of Liberty, won't allow them to think it safe, unless the Conservators of it are exactly according to their Standard. They are too rigid Examiners of the Mistakes of those, that are not in their good Graces, and at the same time overlook perhaps as gross Faults in those whom they honour with their Friendship, which yet detracts from the Credit of (what they would pretend to be) Reformers, and discovers that they are animated by the narrow Spirit of a Party. They only contemplate and expose the frail Side of those they don't affect, and won't allow the Ballance to be laid before them, of the Good and Evil they have done, to make a proportionable Abatement according to Prudence and Equity. They are so enamour'd with their own Capacity, and so fully satisfy'd that theirs is the proper Talent for Business, that they think it is being injurious to the Publick, not to employ them in the way they would propose; and to possess a Place, which they conceive would better become themselves, are Crimes irremissible.

Thus

Thus Guilt sticks to Places of Profit and Credit, as the *Jewish* Leprosy did formerly to the Walls of the Houses; and you must go out of them, to get clear of the Infection. But tho' these are Obstacles to the Repose of a Country, which keep it in a constant Vibration, that it cannot find its Center of Settlement; yet since these Passions don't fall upon the Stupid and Unthinking, I hope the good Sense of those who are at present unluckily bias'd by them, will restrain them from sinking the Vessel in which themselves are embark'd, tho' the Helm be not committed to them. It is to be hop'd, that Persons of Understanding and Knowledge in the World will rather find out Means to recover the Ground they seem to have lost, than be obstinate to make their Ways more slippery, till they are carried upon a Precipice, where the next Step must be inevitable Ruin.

The Meaning of all these Parties, if they have their main Interest, their Stake, Estate and Friends in this Nation, is and must be to preserve it, tho' not from perfect Monarchy, and absolute Power of a Crown at home (which some like the best) yet to preserve us, at least, from the Yoke of Foreign Power, from being overgrown by States that are about us, and coming down from being the principal in Power and Riches, to be the last in *Europe*. This surely, whatever else may be his Interest, is the Interest of every individual *Briton*, in all these Parties, to prevent: But if this be what is least done; if this not only be not prevented, but be the only thing that every Party, tho' not intentionally, yet really does draw on, advance and promote; then we are in that State I mention'd; in the fairest way that can be thought on to every thing that can be call'd Ruin or Destruction to a Country.

Which Party soever prevails in the End, they all concur by their Divisions in weakening the Interest of their Country, and rendering it a Prey some time or other to a potent Neighbour. And the *Jacobites* especially must reckon a
foreign

foreign Conquest the inevitable Effect of their Success. Which however I should never be afraid of, if there was an entire and close Union among the rest of the Nation, who are, or pretend to be, on the side of the Government, and guided by Revolution Principles.

But is it not shocking to think, that Men should so far abandon their Reason, their Principles, the Interest of their Country, and their own particular Interests, to their private Passions and Resentments, as to suffer the Jacobites to be daily gaining ground upon them by their Divisions? I cannot entertain so harsh a Thought of Men, who have formerly signaliz'd their Fidelity and Affection to the present happy Establishment, as to imagine they can have any Views or Designs that are destructive thereto. But I wish their Ambition or other Passions, which often get the better of some People, may not have been of Benefit and Service to the Jacobites, and a great Article of their present Power: Or that there future Obstinacy may not enable them finally to accomplish their Designs.

*Quod procul a nobis flectat Fortuna gubernans;
Et ratio potius, quam res persuadeat ipsa.*

I know very well, there is a Set of sanguine Tempers, who deride and ridicule in the number of Fopperies all such Apprehensions as these. They have it ready in their Mouths, that the People of *Great-Britain* are of a Genius and Temper, never to admit Slavery amongst them; and they are furnish'd with a great many Common-places on this Subject. Besides, the Jacobites crying up Liberty and Property as much as any, makes some Gentlemen mistake them for other Men, and consequently very liberal to them upon occasion. But it seems to me, that such Discourers do reason upon short Views, and a very moderate Compass of Thought; for I think it a great Error to count

upon

upon the Genius of a Nation, as a standing Argument in all Ages, since there is hardly a Spot of Ground in Europe, where the Inhabitants have not frequently and entirely chang'd their Temper and Genius. Neither, can I see any Reason, why the Genius of a Nation should be more fix'd in the Points of Government, than in their Morals, their Learning, their Religion, their common Humour and Conversation, their Diet, and their Complexion; which do all notoriously vary almost in every Age, and may every one of them have great Effects upon Men's Notions of Government. And Experience tells us, that there are other Things too, which have a mighty powerful Efficacy to change Men's Principles. For we have now too many amongst us, who seem to act upon quite different Views, from what they did but a Year or two ago.

Some of us have seen the Times, when all the Court, and a great Part of the Church, were in direct opposition to our Civil and Religious Liberties. There was ground enough then for the Nicknames of *Whig* and *Tory*, *Court* and *Country Party*, *High* and *Low Churchmen*, as every Man thought fit to rank himself, or was reputed by others. But now there is no Room for such odious Distinctions; the Interest of the King and the People being both entirely center'd in the present Government, no Person in his right Wits can now be an Enemy to the State on the Principle of Liberty, which is made the Pretence of all Parties; and consequently, it is to invert the original Significations of these Terms, (or Badges of Distinction) to call one a *Royalist* or *Tory* for opposing, and another a *Commonwealths-Man* or *Whig* for siding with the present Government.

There is one Circumstance with relation to Parties, which I take to be, of all others, most pernicious in a State; *the Influence of one upon many*. I would be glad any Partisan would help me to tolerable Reason, that because *Clodius* and *Curio* happen to agree with me in a few singular Notions,

tions, I must therefore blindly follow them in all: Or, to state it at best, that because *Bibulus* the *Party-Man* is persuaded, that *Clodius* and *Curio* do really propose the good of their Country, as their chief End; therefore *Bibulus* shall be wholly guided and govern'd by them, in the Means and Measures towards it. Is it enough for *Bibulus* and the rest of the Herd to say, without farther examining, *I am of the Side with Clodius, or I Vote with Curio*? Are these proper Methods to form, and make up what they call, *the united Wisdom of the Nation*? Is it not possible that, upon some Occasions, *Clodius* may be bold and insolent, born away by his Passion, malicious and revengeful, that *Curio* may be corrupt, and expose to sale his Tongue or his Pen? I conceive it far below the Dignity, both of humane Nature, and humane Reason, to be engag'd in any Party, the most plausible soever, upon such servile Conditions.

10 Again, If we take a View of the Nation as to Religion, we are divided into Protestants and Papists. As to the Subdivisions among the Papists, it signifies little to our Subject to take any Notice of them: for though some of them are so moderate, as to think they ought to live quietly under any Government, that secures them in their Property; yet our *English* Papists being generally Perverts, and by consequence declar'd Traitors to the *British* Constitution, it follows naturally, that they must be Enemies to a Government, which considers them no otherwise than as criminal Subjects.

But to return to the Protestants. They are divided into Churchmen and Dissenters, and each of these have their Subdivisions. There are High-Churchmen, and Moderate-Churchmen; the former think Episcopacy of Divine Right, and some of them fly so high, as to say, There's no Salvation without it; the latter think that Episcopacy and Ceremonies are only the Product of Ecclesiastical Prudence and Order, and derive their chief Authority from the Statute Book: the former are for bringing all Men to a strict Uni-
convinced
formity,

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formity, by Penal Laws; the latter are for indulging their Fellow Christians, against a coercive Power in Matters Religious. Some of them again are *Arminians*, and others *Calvinists*, and a third Sort of the Middle-way. Some of them are for Passive Obedience, in the Sense it was taught in the late Reigns; some of them are for reconciling that Doctrine with the Principles of the Revolution; Some of them are for signing the Articles of the Church, as Terms of Peace; others, are for subscribing them as the Confession of their own Faith, and the principal Terms of Communion with the Church; some of them are for the Morality of the *Sabbath*, and others against it, and for a Book of Sports. And there has been for several Years a Division among them, pursued with Acrimony and Heat enough, about the Power of the Upper and Lower Houses of Convocation.

Then as to the Dissenters, they are subdivided into *Presbyterians*, *Independants*, *Quakers*, and others; and each of these have their Subdivisions: and as all of them are against the Establish'd Church, the Church is likewise against all of them. This weakens our mutual Confidence in one another, creates Animosities and Jealousies, and makes us far less considerable, than otherwise we should be.

Our Common Enemies make use of our Contentions about Religion and the Church, as a principal Handle for their Purpose. They have their Agents employ'd, to kindle and foment the bigotted Zeal of all Sides, who were never known to be more violently inflam'd, than at this present Juncture. Religion, in these latter Ages, seems to have lost every thing else but the bare sound of the Word; And considering how that for the most part is us'd, it would be well if we were left without it also; For it is become the mere Tool of a Party, to bring about Designs of another Kind, and often incompatible with the Interest of Religion.

I can never bring myself to reflect Calmly or with Patience on one Thing, *viz.* the chief Part which some of our
Divines

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Divines are made to act in this Tragedy. 'Tis true, Christian Charity will not suffer me to think so wickedly of them, as to believe they have any Design upon the Church, while they appear so earnest in its Quarrel. But they must be very weak and short-sighted, who do not discern the dangerous Tendency of the unhappy Contests, that are at present so warmly maintain'd concerning this Matter; and that while some appear to fight for Religion, they do in effect fight against it: For instead of opposing the common Enemies of our Church, they fall foul upon its real Friends, whatever they may take them to be; and are themselves guilty of the same Charge, which, without any ground, they would fix upon others. But I shall not dip into this Point, my Business being to consider the Matter so far only as it affects our Civil Interests and Concernments.

As the Leprosy of *Gehazi*, that stuck to him and his House for ever, it has been the perpetual Itch of the Priesthood to be intermeddling in secular Affairs. They were design'd for glorious Stars, and had their Sphere allow'd them wherein to shine; but when they descend to lower Regions, they degenerate to pernicious Meteors. If they would confine themselves to their own Province, specious Pretences of Religion would never hurt us; but the Design of Christianity might prosper, and the chief End of the Gospel be effectually obtain'd through the Blessing of the Almighty upon their Labours. This is what their Concern ought principally to be employ'd about. But to tack other Matters to Religion, with which indeed it has nothing to do, and to prosecute By-ends under the colour of it: Nay and (as is frequently done) to prostitute it to the wickedest Purposes, by stirring up Sedition and Rebellion, by incensing one Part of the Nation against the other, by filling Peoples Minds with unnecessary Jealousies and Fears, and causing a general Uneasiness and Dissatisfaction: All this, I say, casts a Reproach on Christianity and the Ministers of it, who

ought to preach Peace and Charity. And such Men, whoever they be, and by what Character or Denomination soever distinguish'd, are intolerable in any Civil Society, and deserve to be treated as its worst Enemies.

Most certain it is, that the Clergy of the Church of England ought to be supported in their lawful Rights, and in all the Power and Dignity that belongs to them. But some of these Men are so eager to extend their Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction, that their straining it so high becomes a perfect Mark of extravagant Ambition, obviously to be objected against, and from which the World draws Inferences no way serviceable to the Church in general. The meddling with the Affairs of Civil Government, and the Kingdoms of this World, does not belong to the Ministers of Christ. And nothing can be more odious or unaccountable, than under this Character, by virtue of which they gain an Ascendant over the Consciences of many People, to make an ill Use of the Confidence their Admirers have in them, by imposing their own Conceits and Opinions in Matters of a purely Civil Nature, as if forsooth the same were necessary to the Salvation of their Souls; for so the Ignorant are apt to believe every thing that is deliver'd from a Pulpit.

There are some Men that are all Flash and Self-conceit, passionate and violent, where the Fondness of their Dotage hurries them. Three dangerous Compositions to misguide such Persons that believe they know more than they do, and never consider the fatal Inconveniences of future Consequences. And from such Men as these, what Good can be expected towards the settling of a Government, that rather requires the most healing and balsamick Remedies, than the pernicious Drugs of Division and Faction, which only fester and corrode? Of this Humour many of our Clergy seem to be: But such a Humour will never suffer the Kingdom to be at rest; such People being Tools still ready at hand for those to work withal, that love to see their Coun-

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try always in a fluctuating Condition. And thus they that should bar up all Entrances against Sedition and Division, are call'd in to be the chief Persons that set open the Doors for Distraction and Commotion, and that prompt and incense precipitate Zeal, wherever they meet with Subjects fit to work upon.

We may pity those, who by their Writings and Doctrines have in some former Reigns defended Maxims pernicious to Society; because I am willing to believe they have been trepann'd by the crafty Wiles of a Court, who made Tools of them unknown to themselves. But it would be a thing most unworthy of Divines, of Christians, and of honest and wise Men, obstinately to espouse such Maxims, as are good for nothing but to increase arbitrary Power in the World, especially when God has more than once deliver'd us from its Rage and Fury. Our good God be for ever blest'd, for that those Divines, who have so far been impos'd upon as to defend such Maxims as hasten'd their own Ruin, and made that of the State inevitable, have now an Opportunity to undeceive themselves by softer and cheaper Ways than those of Popish Butcheries and Arbitrary Power, which without question would have open'd their Eyes wide enough, and made them hate those Maxims only somewhat too late for the Good of the Church and Commonwealth.

The wisest Governments have always excluded their Clergy from Affairs of State; from whence they have receiv'd the double Benefit of having their ghostly Occasions better serv'd, and their temporal Concerns less embroil'd. For of all Men living they have the worst luck in Politicks; whether it be or not (says a judicious Person) that the Clergy are not so well fitted by Education, as others, for political Affairs, I know not: Tho' I should think they have Advantages above others, and, if they would but even keep to the Bible, might make the best Ministers of State in the World; yet it is generally observ'd that Things miscarry under

under their Government. If there be any Counsel more precipitate, more violent, rigorous and extreme than another, it is theirs. Truly I think the Reason that God does not bless them in Affairs of State, is, because he never intended them for that Employment. Yet these are the Men that must be cutting us out Schemes of Politicks, prescribing to the Government, and determining the Rights of Princes. What a Hotchpotch have they made with their Kings *de facto*, their *Jure divino*, their Passivity and Nonresistance? But these are beaten Topicks, which yet I could not but glance upon, because of the ill Blood which these Men have caus'd among us. If some few of their Leaders (for I would be understood in all that is here said of the disaffected High-Church Party) have obtain'd a Character of Sobriety and Piety, it may be the better for themselves; but had they been all of a piece, their Example had been of less Influence to disturb the Publick. If a *Corah*, *Dathan*, or *Abiram* withheld their Obedience from *Moses*, their Retinue of Adherers may be thin enough; but if an *Aaron* sets up a Golden Calf, 'tis no wonder if *Israel* worship it. But God be thank'd, we have enough even of their own Cloth to overballance them; and if the Scales are even, we could throw in the Approbation of all Reform'd Churches and Societies throughout *Europe*. Even the Hierarchy of the Church of *England* is still safe, and like to continue so, if the Faction amongst her Clergy (her Steeple and Pinacle Men) by their Perverseness and Capriciousness would not alienate the Minds of People from them, as there is already but too visible a Declension. For upon whomsoever these Men shall please to lay the blame, it will be reply'd to them in the Words of the Satyrists, *Pace vestra liceat dixisse, vos primi omnium Ecclesiam perdidistis.*

All these things put together (not to descend to particular Considerations) make a considerable Part of the melancholy and dangerous State of the Nation at this present Time.

Time. And every one who is not wilfully Blind, must easily discern, that it is highly necessary for us at this Juncture, to think of applying proper Remedies towards a Cure. And this naturally leads me to make some Observations on the three last Paragraphs of HIS MAJESTY'S Speech, which relate principally and entirely to this Head.

My LORDS and GENTLEMEN,

I could heartily wish, that at a Time when the common Enemies of our Religion are, by all manner of Artifices, endeavouring to undermine and weaken it, both at Home and Abroad, all those who are Friends to our present happy Establishment, might unanimously concur in some proper Method for the greater strengthening the Protestant Interest; of which, as the Church of England is unquestionably the main Support and Bulwark, so will she reap the principal Benefit of every Advantage accruing by the Union, and mutual Charity of all Protestants.

As Matters are now, 'tis certain the Protestant Interest is in very great Danger. Therefore it is requisite that they should bethink themselves of Methods for their own security in all Events.

The Romish Idolatry hath a great Advantage over the Reformation, in these following Particulars.

First, That it better suits the ambitious Designs of Princes who have a mind to be Arbitrary: For a Largess to the Church, they may soon be absolv'd from all Obligations to maintain their Subjects in the Possession of their Property. Coronation Oaths, Instruments of Government, Pacta Conventa, Claims of Right, Golden Bulls, Constitutions of Diets, Parliaments and Cortes, or what you will, are but so many Cobwebs, that are easily swept down by the Pope's Dispensations. Murders, Assassinations, Massacres, and the greatest of Crimes that Hell can suggest, or that de-

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deprav'd Man can execute, may easily be hallow'd by the Pope's Consecration. To break Faith with Hereticks is a Virtue, to observe it is a Crime, by the Determination of their Councils; so that we cannot take too many Precautions against that Religion, and the Princes that profess it: Honour and good Nature do sometimes overcome the Poison of their Principles, but they are not to be too securely relied on.

A second Advantage that Popery has over the Reformation, is this, That according to their Principles, Men may be as wicked as they please, and yet force their Way to Heaven, by Pardons, Indulgences, Jubilees, Penances, Soul-Masses, &c. but best of all, by persecuting and destroying those they call Hereticks; this is a ready Atonement for the greatest Cruelty, or most unnatural Lust; and therefore a Principle that the Reform'd ought to provide against, as one of the most prevailing upon deprav'd Nature, that ever the Author of false Religions invented.

A third Advantage they have over the Reformation, is this, That the Romanists have a fix'd and certain Head, who protects and assists them all over the World, and to him they have recourse in all Exigencies. The Pope, or rather the See of Rome, is the Center of their Union; and though their Differences among themselves be greater, more numerous, and pursu'd with as much Acrimony, as those among Protestants, the Pope and his Conclave are so politick, as to keep all of them within the Pale of the Church; and to the shame of some Protestants, don't narrow the Terms of Communion, so as to throw any of them out; nor are their different Opinions an Obstruction to the Civil Preferment of any Layman, of this or that Sect.

In order to counterballance those Advantages, it follows naturally, That Protestant Princes and States should enter into a League offensive and defensive upon the account of their Religion. That the Government of every Protestant Kingdom and State should take care that no Protestants, who

who agree in the establish'd Doctrine of their respective Kingdoms or States, should for their Differences in other Things be made incapable of Ecclesiastical or Civil Preferment; that there should be a mutual Forbearance of one another in those minute Differences, and no other Terms of Communion impos'd upon any, but those that are the reveal'd Terms of Salvation. There's no Reform'd Nation in the World so guilty of this as *England*, and therefore 'tis our Interest more than others to beware of it.

Though the Principles of the Reformation (or, which is all one, true Christianity) are so noble and sublime, that they will not allow us to look for a Spiritual Head any lower than Heaven, it does not therefore follow, but Protestants may agree upon a common Protector and Civil Head on Earth. This falls naturally upon the Government of our Island, and was gloriously perform'd by Queen *Elizabeth*, notwithstanding the disadvantage of her Sex: Why those who succeeded her till the late Revolution, did not act the same part, the Reasons are so well known, that they need not be insisted on.

But at present we have a Prince, the Hero of his Age, the Representative of a Family, which for a Hundred Years past has been a great Scourge of Popery, and one of the principal Bucklers of the Reformation. What is it therefore, that can hinder the Protestant World from acknowledging him as their common Protector? In order to this, it seems to be the Interest of this Nation to enable HIS MAJESTY to act as such, and to assist him in an Enquiry to find out and prevent the Causes why the Protestant Interest has declin'd so much of late all over the World.

In order to make his Majesty take upon him this glorious Province, 'tis not only necessary that there should be such a League among Protestant Princes and States, as abovemention'd, and that they should all agree to give his Majesty full Power to enquire into the Invasions made upon the Pro-

testant Interest through the World, and in the Name of the Whole to protest against them, and demand and attempt a Redress; but that all Differences among ourselves should likewise be so far compromis'd, as it shall not be in the Power of any future Prince or Party, Domestick or Foreign; to arm Protestants of one Denomination against those of another, under any Pretence whatsoever. That was the Method taken in some late Reigns to introduce Popery and Slavery, and therefore having already suffer'd under it, we should be the more careful to avoid it.

How this *Union at Home* shall be brought about, is now the great Question, and requires the united Wisdom of the Nation in Parliament to resolve it. The Obstacles indeed, are so many and great, that it will be very difficult to surmount them. Nevertheless, when we seriously consider the great danger the Protestant Interest is expos'd to all over *Europe*, that nothing less is intended than the rooting out of that vile pestilent Northern Herefy, as the Enemies of our Religion are pleas'd to call it; I hope we will think more than once upon it, and not by our Neglect contribute to the utter Subversion of the Protestant Religion in general every where, as the cutting of these Kingdoms from it, must necessarily occasion. 'Tis well known, that these Churches of *Great-Britain* and *Ireland*, and more particularly that of *England*, have been justly look'd upon as *the main Support and Bulwark of the Protestant Interest*; and therefore the Papists have us'd their utmost Fraud in undermining of it, and their utmost Violence in raising up their Batteries against it; assuring themselves, if they could but once gain this *Bulwark*, they would quickly, and with much Ease make themselves Masters of the whole Fort.

One of the principal Artifices made use of by them for this Purpose, is to corrupt and incense a sort of Men, from whom we might reasonably expect better Things, to raise and foment Divisions among Protestants, I mean the dis-

disaffected among the Clergy, whom I have already had occasion to mention on another Head. 'Tis pity that any of these Weeds, that have pester'd our Paradise, should grow upon consecrated Ground. These Men were the first that discover'd their Discontent upon the new Settlement at the late Glorious Revolution. I would by no means be thought to reflect upon the Church of *England*, a Church that makes the greatest Figure in the Reformation: But nothing is so frequent or pernicious, as to mistake Names for Things. We have been told what the Church of *England* is in the true Notion, that it is the Body of the People and Clergy together in Communion, under a Discipline and Worship established by Law. But it has been a State Trick of the Clergy in all Times to engross to themselves the Name of the Church. Ours have their Hierarchy, and in God's Name let them have it; and let them in God's Name make right use of it. The Word Church, as the Matter is now order'd, is made a Camelion, that takes its Complexion, and varies with every Light: With some it is the *Pretender*, with others it is *Slavery*; with Bigots 'tis Ceremonies; with the Ambitious among the Clergy, 'tis the Exercise of Dominion.

What has more amus'd us than the Outcry of the Church's being in Danger? We know who they were that first began the Peal: They were generally the most licentious of the Clergy, who were under a pannick Fear of Reformation, the only Alteration, whereof they could possibly have any Apprehension. This Clamour about the Church has been kept up these thirty Years, almost without any Intermision: But when it is really in Danger through their own Imprudence and Mismanagement, then it is they hold their peace. Now that there is any Talk of an Union among Protestants, we must expect fresh Peals of Ordnance from some Pulpits, of the languishing State of the Church, and the Danger of its being swallow'd up by other Sects: And

the worst Things that can be devis'd of the Protestant Dissenters, are to be said of them, in order to fix an ill Impression of them on the Minds of the Populace, and to enkindle their fiery Zeal against them.

These Church Bigots are of a different Opinion from His MAJESTY in this Matter, who says, that the Church of England will reap the principal Benefit of every Advantage accruing by the Union and mutual Charity of all Protestants. That the Church of England, in its true Notion, must by such an Union be under as strong Assurance as is possible, is visible even to its greatest Enemies; so secure, that they will have no way left to bring it into danger, but by persuading Men that it is in danger. There is indeed a factious Party of the Church of England (as they pretend) viz. those call'd the Nonjurors, who have brought themselves into Danger and Ruin; but it is by their own Treachery against and Defection from the main Body of the rest. Whoever are such Church of England-men (and I'm afraid too many, who pretend to be Members of the present Establishment, are very near akin to them) I would only ask them, How long they are resolv'd to be Tools and Properties to their mortal Enemies, as well as ours, the Papists? How long they will continue to be their infatuated Adventurers, and be playing their Game for them at their own Expence and Hazard? The Papists have an Interest to serve in overthrowing our Religion, while nothing remains for them, but to share in the common Calamity, which they endeavour to bring upon us, and perhaps to fall the first Sacrifices.

But notwithstanding the endeavour'd Opposition of those abovemention'd, whose Characters I have largely consider'd, there are not wanting many Friends to our present happy Establishment, who 'tis hop'd will effectually answer His MAJESTY's Wish, by unanimously concurring in some proper Method for strengthening the Protestant Interest. We ought carefully to distinguish between the factious Church of Eng-

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land and the true Church of *England*. For as the Church of *Rome* arrogates to it self the Name and Title of Catholick, and excludes all others, who are not of that Communion, from any Right to it, and yet is it self at best but a part of that which is indeed the Catholick Church; so the great Zealots of the Faction, under the Name of the Church of *England*, will hardly deign the Name of Church of *England*-men to any who run not to the same Excess with themselves; tho' if the Matter be rightly computed, they will not be found so great a Part of those who do justly come under that Denomination, much less of the People and Strength of this Nation, as they may seem to some, and would be thought to be. For of those who are not inferior to any either in Conformity to the Church both in Doctrine and Worship, and that not out of any sneaking or crafty Compliance, but Judgment and Choice; or much more in true Loyalty and Fidelity to the King in his just and legal Rights; they are as little inferior in Number or Interest: Who, notwithstanding preferring Christianity it self before any particular Church, and a complete genuine Loyalty to the entire State and Constitution, before a partial pretended Loyalty to any Party in it, do not think themselves oblig'd, either by any Duty to the present Church, to neglect the greater Duties of Christianity, Charity, and reasonable Condescension in Things indifferent; or, by any Reverence to Ancestors, to neglect what is necessary at this time, as well for Peace and Unity, as for Supply and Improvement of what they themselves had begun, and was not then complete and perfect.

It must be chiefly by the Influence of Men of this Temper, that any Good can be done towards this desirable Union: For without them the Work will stick on all hands, there being too many Bigots among every Sect or Denomination of Protestants to retard its Progress. Nevertheless, it must be own'd, that Bigotry has been losing Ground above these fifty Years. The greatest part of the People have

have learnt to distinguish between what is taught them by their Priests with regard to their Spiritual and Temporal Welfare, and what is only subservient to the Advancement of the Priestly Interest. The prevailing Opinion now in England is *Latitudinarian*: Most Men are so far improv'd in their Judgments, as to believe that Heaven is not entail'd upon any particular Opinion, and that either an Episcopal or Presbyterian Way of Worship, together with a due Observation of the Laws of the Gospel, may serve well enough to carry them to Heaven; the only Bias, which inclines them to the one side or the other, being the Laws. *Be subject to the higher Powers, not for Wrath but Conscience*, sways the Scale, and gives the casting Vote in such things as are thought indifferent. This is it which crouds the Church, otherwise the Sarfnet Hood and Lawn Sleeves might be as destitute of Votaries as the long Cloak and Collar Band.

I shall not descend to Particulars, or advance any private Opinion or Scheme for the effecting this *Union and mutual Charity of all Protestants*: HIS MAJESTY has recommended this Task to the Wisdom of Parliament, and there let it rest. However, I hope I may, without encroaching upon their Province, offer a few impartial Thoughts concerning the Duty of the Establish'd Church, and of the Dissenters, mutually, in this grand Affair.

To begin with the former. It could be wish'd, that a Commission were appointed for Ecclesiastical Affairs, whose Work should be to render our Church Constitutions as rational and accountable, as the Substantials of our Religion are; *so that he that runs may read*: That is, to compile such a *Liturgy, Articles, Canons*, and other Ecclesiastical Constitutions, as may fit lose to the Rule of Scripture, and leave no room for the Scruples or Exceptions of any rational Person of the soberer sort of either side, as to indifferent Things, which are therefore alterable.

This to many may seem a very difficult Undertaking, and indeed Experience has already confirm'd it to be so, there having been formerly such Commissions granted for this Purpose, without any Effect; and the more's the Pity. But still the Thing itself is highly reasonable and expedient, especially at such a Juncture as the present; and surely it is far more necessary than to write Rationals of strain'd and foreign Arguments to defend the present Establishment. This stiff way of forcing Conformity is not practicable in a discerning Age; and therefore ought to give place to more prudent and better Methods. If that abovemention'd cannot produce its desired Effect, it may however do some Good, and if the most necessary Alterations were made and comply'd with, 'tis probable this in a great Measure would do the Work.

I hope no Churchmen, how bigotted soever, will affirm, that our Ecclesiastical Constitution does not require any Alterations and Improvements. It was the Opinion of the wisest Heads of the Nation, about thirty Years ago, that a great many were then wanting in every Branch of it, and nothing has been done since to the Purpose. We may judge how many Things were believ'd to be amiss, by the Design of the Ecclesiastical Commission granted in 1689, which is fully express'd in the Body of it. I think it will not be improper to present the Reader with it here.

Whereas the particular Forms of Divine Worship, and the Rites and Ceremonies appointed to be us'd therein, being Things in their own Nature indifferent and alterable, and so acknowledg'd; it is but reasonable, that upon weighty and important Considerations, according to the various Exigences of Times and Occasions, such Changes and Alterations should be made therein, as to those that are in Place and Authority should from time to time seem either necessary or expedient.

And

" And *whereas* the Book of Canons is fit to be review'd,
 " and made more suitable to the State of the Church;
 " And *whereas* there are Defects and Abuses in the Ecclesi-
 " astical Courts and Jurisdictions, and particularly there is
 " not sufficient Provision made for the removing of scanda-
 " lous Ministers, and for the reforming of Manners, either
 " in Ministers or People: And *whereas* it is most fit, that
 " there should be a strict Method preferib'd for the Exami-
 " nation of such Persons as desire to be admitted into Holy
 " Orders, both as to their Learning and Manners:
 " *We* therefore, out of our Pious and Princely Care for
 " the good Order and Edification, and Unity of the Church
 " of England committed to our Charge and Care; and for
 " the reconciling, as much as is possible, of all Differences among
 " our good Subjects, and to take away all Occasions of the like
 " for the future, have thought fit to authorize and empower
 " you, &c. and any Nine of you, whereof three to be Bi-
 " shops, to meet from time to time, as often as shall be
 " needful, and to prepare such Alterations of the *Liturgy*
 " and *Canons*, and such Proposals for the Reformation of
 " Ecclesiastical Courts, and to consider of such other Mat-
 " ters, as in your Judgments may most conduce to the Ends
 " abovemention'd.

If the Church, for their own sake as well as that of others,
 should heartily fall about such a Work, and come to a
 Temper of Tenderness towards Protestant Dissenters, these
 ought in Prudence and Moderation to accept thereof. And
 though perhaps the Terms propos'd on the other side may
 still seem to them somewhat too narrow; yet let them turn
 the Point of the Dagger against their own Breasts, and
 consider what they would do in the like Case, if their
 Church-Government was uppermost in the State, and by
 Law Establish'd; whether it would not then be difficult to
 persuade them to recede from any of their Constitutions,
 though however indifferent Things? Whether they would
 not

not be very sparing, and yield with reluctancy? And whether many of those kind of Objections now rais'd by the Church against them, would not then be us'd by them against the Church.

I know it has been rumour'd abroad, as if the Dissenters would never be satisfied, unless Episcopacy be abolish'd. But this is a notorious Calumny cast upon them on purpose to create Jealousies in the Minds of People, who are well affected to the Church, and to enlarge the Breach between them and the Dissenters, that so these may be kept out of the Church's Liberties, for fear (as is pretended) of future Danger to it.

These mutual Condescensions are absolutely necessary to an Agreement; but they are no more than Preliminaries to the Main Design; and a *British* Parliament must lend the finishing Hand to the Work. Whether they will attempt it or no, or in case they do, whether or no it will absolutely succeed, a little Time will certainly Discover. It is plain, HIS MAJESTY expects that some endeavours should be us'd in this Affair; And I'm sure 'tis also the Desire of *all those who are Friends to our present happy Establishment.*

But the only effectual way to remove our Divisions, is to allow none of the contending Parties any Power over another: and that since Ecclesiasticks are generally too narrow-soul'd to enlarge their Terms of Communion, the State should do it for them, and not suffer one part of their Subjects to tear to pieces, and anathematize another that differs from them in such Things as cannot be found plainly express'd in the Text, or naturally deducible from it. 'Tis therefore the Interest of the State to reduce all that is to be enjoin'd for Faith and Practice, to the Standard of Revelation, without allowing any humane Impositions for Terms of Communion; and in such Things as they differ from

one another, they ought to be oblig'd to a mutual Forbearance. This is the Apostle's Rule for the Christian Church; and when Ecclesiasticks come to such a Temper of their own accord, or by the Care and Conduct of the Civil Magistrate, then, and not till then, are we to expect the Return of Primitive Simplicity and true Catholick Christianity, which will make the Lion lie down with the Lamb, and prevent Religion's being made a Firebrand to Civil Contentions.

I proceed now to the next Paragraph of HIS MAJESTY'S Speech, which runs thus,

As none can recommend themselves more effectually to my Favour and Countenance, than by a sincere Zeal for the just Rights of the Crown, and the Liberties of the People; so I am determin'd to encourage all those who act agreeably to the Constitution of these my Kingdoms, and consequently to the Principles on which my Government is founded.

Our Precaution in this critical Juncture ought not only to extend to Differences in Matters of Religion, of which we have largely discours'd, but also to those of another Nature, which have been made use of to foment Civil Differences amongst us; such as Men's different Opinions about the extent of Prerogative, or the Privilege and Power of Parliaments; by which we have been and continue still to be divided, under the odious Distinction of *Whig* and *Tory*. There's no wise Men of either of those Denominations, but when sedately discours'd, will tell you, that he's for preserving the true *English* Constitution: then since it is so, and the known Laws of the Land are the Boundary between *Prerogative* and *Property*, what Reason is there that any Man who is willing to give that security for his Allegiance which the Law requires, should be look'd upon with

with an *Boil Eye*, for we thought incapable of serving the State? Such Differences, as they weaken our mutual Confidence in one another, and render us uneasy at Home, make us also less considerable Abroad, and more subject to the Intrigues of Foreign Princes and States.

It is worthy our Observation, that HIS MAJESTY very wisely joins the *Liberties* of his People with his own *Prerogative*; and indeed they ought always to be inseparable, for it is the greatest Glory of the King's Perogative and Power to defend the Rights and Properties of his Subjects. The People of *Great-Britain* have the same Title unto, and Security for the Enjoyment of their *Liberties* and *Properties*, that our Kings have unto their *Crowns*, or for Defence of the Regal Dignity: For as they can plead nothing for what they enjoy or claim, but by fundamental and positive Laws; so the Subject's Interest in his Liberty and Property is conveyed unto him by the same Terms and Channels, and fenced about with the same Hedges and Pales. But some of our late Kings it seems had another notion of this Matter. Instead of joining, they in their Speeches usually disjoined and opposed these two Things to each other, as if they had been incompatible. It was no wonder therefore if it was esteemed Treason in those Reigns for the Subject to pretend any Claim to Liberty or Property, seeing this was an Invasion of the Royal *Prerogative*.

If fatal Experience did not tell us the contrary, it would methinks be impossible to persuade a reasonable Man, that any Subjects could be fond of this false and Tyrannical Notion of Government. There are many who think 'tis nothing else, but to live in Riches and Pleasure, and have all Things at Command; but they are quite Mistaken, for Government is in reality a pressing and weighty Burden, the best Princes have own'd it, and found they were not able alone to support it. Thus *Moses*, a Prince of extraordinary

inary natural Endowments, besides what he had of supernatural Assistance, found it too heavy for his Shoulders, and therefore chose able Men from among the People, Men of Truth, such as feared God and hated Covetousness, to assist him in it. But these Gentlemen fancy an absolute and uncontrollable Power is best for the Prince, and that he is injur'd, if he be abridg'd in what the foolish World have thought fit to call *Prerogative*, whereas by Divine Appointment, the *Prerogative* is nothing else but a Power to do Good and prevent Evil, to encourage good Men, and punish wicked Men, to attend constantly on the Administration, and to have a Revenue from the Publick to support them in so doing. This is all the *Prerogative* that Heaven hath allow'd to Kings or any other Governors. What's more than this, derives its Origin from some other place. That Power which Men of such Principles allow to Kings, puts them in the most dangerous Condition that can be, and sets them upon a Precipice, from whence they must unavoidably break their Necks. This Ambition of Princes of old, made *Juvenal* say,

*Sine Cade & Sanguine pauci
Descendunt Reges, & sicca monte Tyranni.*

Plato and *Aristotle*, who had nothing but humane Reason to direct them, had a much better Idea of the Nature of Government, than your Court-bred Christians. They can tell us, there was no surer Characteristick to distinguish a King from a Tyrant, than that the former sought the Common Good, and the latter his own Pleasure and Profit. And as to the Burden of the Government, *Cornelius Tacitus*, an able Statesman and Historian, owns it, when he says, *Nescit quam grave & intolerandum sit cuncta regnandi onus.*

If we consider the fundamental Laws of the *English* Government, we may perceive they are fram'd with that happy Temperament, as might be apt to render our Princes most glorious and honourable, and the People most happy.

py. Our good and wise Ancestors have so dispos'd the Sovereign Authority, that our Kings should have no Power to do Wrong or Mischief, and they should want no Power to do Good; the People should not be obnoxious to any unjust arbitrary Empire, and yet withal they should be sufficiently restrain'd from unbridled Vice and Licentiousness.

To this end it has been thought reasonable, that the whole Legislative Power should not be lodg'd in the Hands of the King only; but the People require to be govern'd as becomes reasonable Creatures. And herein their Liberty does chiefly consist, that they can be *oblig'd by no Laws but such as themselves approve*, and judge most meet for the common Good. This is the prime fundamental Law, that the Law of God should be own'd as supreme; that no *Doctrines of Religion* should be impos'd, but such as the People may perceive, and by their Representatives acknowledge, as being conformable to the Divine Law: That the People should enjoy the *safe Possession of their Lives and Estates*, in such manner as the Law prescribes: That the Wealth of the Nation should be no otherwise dispos'd, but as themselves allow by their Representatives in Parliament: And that Sentence of Law should be pronounc'd against them, not according to the sole Opinion of HIS MAJESTY'S Judges, but with the joint Verdict of their Fellow-Subjects and Citizens. These are the prime Laws, which concern the Rights and Liberties of the People.

In respect of the Prince, it is his great Prerogative to enjoy all Power that might be useful to put these Laws in execution, for the common Good and Happiness of himself and his People. To this end he has a Negative Voice in making all Laws, to be employ'd by the Advice of his Council appointed for that and the like purposes; lest at any time a licentious Faction should disable him to answer the necessary Ends of Government. He appoints all Judges and other Officers, who are concern'd to execute the Laws in all Civil Matters.

Matters. He appoints those Ecclesiastical Officers, who are to execute those Laws which have reference to Religion. He has the Disposal of all Arms, and the Power of the Militia, for the Defence of the Government; by which Power of disposing all the principal Offices, Ecclesiastical, Civil, and Military (if he approves himself sincere and faithful to his own and the publick Interest and Honour) he cannot easily fail to establish his Authority so securely, that he may command all the Force of the Nation for his Service.

But that it may appear, this Power of disposing all Magistrates was design'd purely in order to the publick Good, all those Magistrates whom he appoints are sworn to execute their Offices strictly according to Law, tho' it be contrary to the personal Commands of the Prince. The Law overrides all those Commissions, which he grants contrary to itself; and his Ministers shall be punish'd as Betrayers of the Publick Weal, if they execute any of his private Commands contrary to Law.

This is a short Account of the fundamental Laws of this Land, of the just Rights of the Crown, and the Liberties of the People; which I would recommend to the Consideration of those, who seem to be very much mistaken in their Notions concerning them, that so they may understand better how to recommend themselves most effectually to HIS MAJESTY'S Favour and Countenance.

To encourage his Friends, is a principal Maxim of HIS MAJESTY'S, and he has taken all Opportunities to declare it since his Accession to the Government of these Realms. It is certainly a happy Maxim for the King, as well as the People, when we consider HIS MAJESTY'S principal Characteristick of his real Friends, viz. to act agreeably to the Principles on which his Government is founded. Some of our late Monarchs, who acted the reverse of this Maxim, were, to their own Cost and the Nation's, made highly sensible of their Error. There were some, even about King William the

the Third of Glorious Memory, who (for base and private Ends) endeavoured to possess His Majesty with the destructive Politicks of courting and buying his Enemies into his Service, and would have persuaded him, that King *James's* Tories were the only Party truly principled for Monarchy, and were fittest for Employments, as being long practis'd in Business: And that, on the contrary, his best Friends (the *Whigs*) were not only ignorant, and unacquainted with publick Business, but were Haters of Monarchy, Men of Republican Principles, and at best for making their Kings no more than Dukes of *Venice*, and Kings of *Clouts*. And some Writers have attributed the Misfortunes, into which this Nation began to relapse before the Revolution was fully settled, to the following in some measure such wretched Advice. I have heard that *Thurloe*, who was Secretary of State to *Cromwell*, being ask'd by King *Charles* the Second, how they did support their Government so long, when all the Nobility, Gentry and Clergy were against it? He reply'd, *By entrusting those only in the Management of all Affairs, who were as heartily against the Nobility, Gentry and Clergy.*

Fas est & ab hoste doceri.
A Prince in Great Britain, that rules according to the Laws and Interests of his People, will never have occasion to make his Court to any Party or Faction. It is below the Dignity of a King to have recourse to such dishonourable Methods; neither is it at all safe for himself or the Kingdom to do it.

Exactly agreeable to this Notion is HIS MAJESTY'S Conduct, the good Effects of which shew themselves. He will not countenance any Party or Set of Men, farther than he finds their Principles and Aims are consistent with the Publick Good. This is HIS MAJESTY'S Rule, and he will have it to be that of his Ministers.

I know there are some well affected Persons to HIS MAJESTY'S Government, who were some time of Opinion, that

that *Tories* as well as *Whigs* ought to have been taken into his Service at HIS MAJESTY'S first Accession to the Crown, in order to gain that Party over to their Duty. But besides that HIS MAJESTY disdain'd such a mean Course, as hiring any of his Subjects to their Obedience, it would have been attended with Consequences very hazardous, if not fatal to HIS MAJESTY and the whole Nation. And this I hope is so evident, that I need not go about to prove it. When such Men have renounc'd the Principles, which are diametrically opposite to those, on which HIS MAJESTY'S Government is founded, it is then time enough to think of employing them: And we may conclude from HIS MAJESTY'S Words, that he will be very ready to do it on such a Reformation. In the mean time, HIS MAJESTY is not at a loss for any want of their Advice. They are bound as Subjects to be loyal and peaceable, whether HIS MAJESTY is pleas'd to make use of them in any particular Capacity or no; and this is all that is requir'd of them.

On the other hand, it is every way as improper to employ and advance such Men, as by taking of Bribes, raising to themselves great Estates by publick Posts, and falling in with Measures that may endanger our Constitution, have brought a Scandal upon their former Principles. The Divine Lawgiver hath told us, that the Test by which Men should qualify themselves for publick Employments, is to *fear God and hate Covetousness*. Lofty Titles, great Friends, and the Favour of Princes, are not capable of inspiring Men with those Qualifications; and therefore ought not to be the determining Characters of those that are fit to serve the Publick, unless to all or any of these there be added Integrity and Virtue; if that be wanting, a Kingdom may be ruin'd instead of being serv'd by those in publick Posts: [*Non tali auxilio nec defensoribus istis, tempus eget.*]

'Tis one of the greatest Disadvantages to which any Government can be liable, to be oblig'd to toss the Administration

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fratration from Faction to Faction; such a Management can never be steady at Home, nor depended upon by its Allies Abroad. This was the reason that in King *Charles* the second's Reign, the *Dutch*, when we came to treat with them, objected the unsteadiness of our Councils, and told us, "That since Queen *Elizabeth's* Time there had been nothing but perpetual Fluctuation in our Conduct; so that they could not rely on our Measures for two Years together, (a) as Sir *William Temple* informs us. To which it is proper to add, what that able Minister said on much such another Occasion as that we now speak of "That (b) without great *Virtue* and steadiness in the Government, and Resolution of going through with whatsoever is thought fit and just, whereby Men may see, that the only way to rise, is to deserve it; all tempering of Factions, taking off Persons, and soothing Parties, is but patching up an ill House: By *Virtue*, I mean that which the greatest Nations of old so politickly favoured, which consisted in those Qualities, that made Men fit for the Service of their Princes and Countries, by strong and healthful Dispositions both of Body and Mind.

It is not the having barely a good King that renders a People happy, but much of it must arise from his having good Ministers about him. And *Machiavel's* Observation, that a wise King will always find wise Ministers, is no more than what every Man is persuaded of upon the first Principles of Reason and common Sense. I do acknowledge that ill Men have ways of thrusting themselves upon Princes, which they that are Virtuous think too unworthy and below them to use: For whereas the latter are always Modest, and seek no Recommendations but from their own Merit; the former are Importunate, and can both flatter and bribe Favourites to speak well of them.

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God be thanked, we have a King, whose uncommon Penetration and Discernment will not suffer any Impositions of this Kind; and it redounds infinitely to HIS MAJESTY'S Honour, that he keeps no *Favorites* about His Royal Person. He is very well acquainted with the Characters of every one, whom he thinks fit to take into his Service. And if any of them should prove so unhappy to themselves, as to deceive their Royal Master's good Opinion of them, He soon discovers that he can be serv'd without them. It is a Part of the King's Royal Prerogative, *to chuse his own Ministers*, which HIS MAJESTY has ever executed with extraordinary Prudence and Management, to his own Honour and the Nation's Advantage. And I should be very unjust to the Merits of those noble and worthy Persons that are now at the Helm, if I did not add, That HIS MAJESTY'S Wisdom is eminently conspicuous in the Choice of such able Men, who do so faithfully discharge their several Duties and high Trusts, to the general Satisfaction of the whole Nation.

I come now to the Conclusion of His MAJESTY'S Speech.

The Eyes of all Europe are upon you at this critical Juncture. It is your Interest, for which Reason I think it mine, That my Endeavours for procuring the Peace and Quiet of Christendom should take Effect. Nothing can so much contribute to this desirable End, as the unanimous Dispatch and Vigour of your Resolutions, for the Support of my Government.

All thinking Men are sufficiently employ'd with the Consideration of the present Posture of Affairs in Europe, which are now come to such a Crisis, that all former Apprehensions of Danger from the growing Power of France, did hardly exceed the present melancholy Conjunction. The Union of some foreign Powers and Potentates, which is already

ready visible, hath a very dismal Aspect, and tends to the Ruin of *Great-Britain*, *Holland*, and the Empire too, and of the whole Protestant Interest. The Calamity is like to be so universal, that all *Europe* ought to be alarm'd, and exert their Wisdom and Courage to divert the Blow, and shelter themselves from it, as from a common Destruction. And though the Emperor seems to be more nearly concern'd for his own Interest, yet who knows not how soon *Great-Britain* may fall under the sad Effects of this surprizing Conjunction?

In this Situation of Affairs, when the Security of the Liberties of *Europe* is the general Concern, the Eyes of the World are all fix'd upon the Parliament of *Great-Britain*. The Interest, as well as Glory of *Great-Britain*, consists in keeping the Ballance of *Europe* in our Hands, which infers an indispensable Necessity of concerning ourselves with what happens in it. For if *Europe* is in Danger, and cannot be rescued from Slavery, but by the effectual Succours of *Great-Britain*, so neither can *Great-Britain* escape if the rest of *Europe* be enslav'd.

But besides, it is in a particular respect our immediate Interest that the Peace of Christendom should be procured, that so the Attempts that are set on foot by our own Enemies both at Home and Abroad, may be effectually disappointed. It is not to be doubted but they will improve the favourable Opportunity of those Disturbances, which threaten *Europe*, to their own Advantage. And it may even be suppos'd that they have a principal Hand in them, and that some promising Designs are particularly laid and projected in their Favour.

But I need not enlarge on this Topick. That there is a Necessity for the Parliament's contributing to render HIS MAJESTY'S Endeavours for procuring the Peace and Quiet of Christendom effectual, I hope will not be controverted. Neither shall I insist on any particular Measures

that may appear most proper to *this desirable End*; but leave the Matter, as the King himself is pleased to do, to the Wisdom of the Great Council of the Nation. But the general Advice in the concluding Period of HIS MAJESTY'S Speech, is of such mighty Consequence to be followed, in order to the attaining of *This* and all other happy Purposes, for the Peace and Prosperity of the Nation, that I think it deserves to be very particularly consider'd. — *Nothing* (says HIS MAJESTY) *can so much contribute, &c. as the unanimous Dispatch and Vigour of your Resolutions, for the Support of My Government.*

The Original Design of Parliaments is for a Support of the King's just Prerogative, and a Protection to the Subjects in their Rights and Privileges; for maintaining all due Honour to the Executive Power, and all suitable Respect and Encouragement to those who are entrusted with the Administration of the Laws; for a Poise and Ballance between the two extreme contending Powers of absolute Monarchy and Anarchy; for a Check and Curb to insolent and licentious Ministers, and a Terror to ambitious and overgrown Statesmen; for giving their Advice to HIS MAJESTY in all Matters of Importance; for making necessary Laws to preserve or improve our Constitution, and abrogating such as are found burdensome and obsolete; for giving the King Money for defraying the Charges and Expences of the Government, or maintaining a necessary War against Foreign or Domestick Enemies; for examining and inspecting the publick Accounts, to know if their Money be applied to its true Use and Purposes: In short, for the best Security imaginable to HIS MAJESTY'S Honour and Royal Dignities, and the Subjects Liberties, Estates and Lives.

From this Description of the Nature and true Design of a Parliament, it appears how great a Power and Trust is invested in it, and that the Fate of the Nation must needs at all Times depend upon it. The chief Thing requir'd therefore

in this critical Juncture, is, that the present Parliament, on whose Decisions and Determinations our All depends, be unanimous, vigorous, and speedy in their Resolves. The King has done his part, and is desirous to be enabled to finish the good Work he has begun. It is now incumbent on that Wise and August Assembly to act theirs: And I hope we may say with HIS MAJESTY, that we doubt not of the Continuance of that Zeal for the Good of their Country, which hath been so eminently conspicuous in every Session of this Parliament.

If they will concur unanimously to make good the things that they have already so frankly promis'd in their Addresses, we have no reason to doubt, but most of those Clouds will disappear, which now obscure our Horizon. The Zeal of the Nation will then be exerted in vigorous Efforts against our common Enemies, and not spent in Party Quarrels and intestine Animosities. We have already seen a hopeful and early Beginning, which encourages us to expect a successful Period of their Deliberations.

We ought to know nothing of Faction in such a Juncture as this, especially within doors. For of all the most threatening and dangerous Symptoms, that can at any time affect the State of this Nation, Parliamentary Divisions look with the most fatal Aspect. When the Head and Intellectuals come once to be affected, 'tis certain the Distemper is risen to a dangerous Height, and that a Crisis is hastening upon us, which will either cure or kill.

Publick Conventions are liable to all the Infirmitie, Follies and Vices of private Men. To which, if there be any Exception, it must be of such Assemblies who act by universal Concern, upon publick Principles, and for publick Ends; such as proceed upon Debates without unbecoming Warmth, or Influence from particular Leaders and Inflamers; such, whose Members, instead of canvassing to procure Majorities for their private Opinions, are ready to comply with general sober Resolutions, tho' contrary to their own Sentiments.

act

act by these and other Methods of the like nature, must be allow'd to be exempt from several Imperfections, to which particular Men are subjected. But I think the Source of most Mistakes and Miscarriages, in Matters debated by publick Assemblies, arises from the Influence of private Persons upon great Numbers, stil'd in common Phrase, *Leading Men and Parties*. And therefore when we sometimes meet a few Words put together, which is call'd the Vote or Resolution of an Assembly, and which we cannot possibly reconcile to Prudence or Publick Good, it is most charitable to conjecture, that such a Vote has been conceiv'd, and born, and bred in a private Brain, afterwards rais'd and supported by an obsequious Party, and then with usual Method confirm'd by an artificial Majority. For, let us suppose Five Hundred Men, mixt in point of Sense and Honesty, as usually Assemblies are; and let us suppose these Men proposing, debating, resolving, voting, according to the meer natural Motions of their own little or much Reason and Understanding: I do allow, that abundance of indigested and abortive, many pernicious and foolish Overtures would arise and float a few Minutes; but then they would die and disappear. Because, this must be said in behalf of Human Kind, that common Sense and plain Reason, while Men are disengag'd from acquir'd Opinions, will ever have some general Influence upon their Minds; whereas the Species of Folly and Vice are infinite, and so different in every Individual, that they could never procure a Majority, if other Corruption did not enter, to pervert Mens Understandings, and misguide their Wills.

To describe how Parties are bred in an Assembly, would be a Work too difficult at present, and perhaps not altogether safe. *Periculosa plenum opus aleæ*. Whether those who are Leaders usually arrive at that Station more by a sort of Instinct, or secret Composition of their Nature, or Influence of the Stars, than by the Possession of any great Abilities, may be a Point of much Dispute. But when the Leader is once fix'd,

fix'd, there will never fail to be Followers. And Man is apt to imitate so much of the Nature of Sheep (*Imitatores, servum pecus*) that whoever is so bold to give the first great Leap over the Heads of those about him (tho' he be the worst of the Flock) shall be quickly follow'd by the rest. Besides, when Parties are once form'd, the Straglers look so ridiculous, and become so insignificant, that they have no other way, but to run into the Herd, which at least will hide and protect them; and where to be much consider'd, requires only to be very violent.

The propos'd Limits of a Sheet, and not the Subject, confine me; and therefore I shall say but little concerning the necessary Means for supporting HIS MAJESTY'S Government in the present Juncture. The King has not made any extraordinary Demands of the Commons for the Service of the succeeding Year, beyond what is requisite in Times of profound Tranquility. Nay, the several Estimates, which HIS MAJESTY has order'd to be laid before them, are considerably diminish'd; and the Army is reduc'd to very near one Half since the Beginning of the last Session of Parliament. When I reflect on HIS MAJESTY'S admirable Conduct, and frugal Management of the publick Money, and his Unwillingness to keep up an unnecessary Charge upon his People, I am amaz'd at the Indiscretion and Ingratitude of some, who, notwithstanding all this, pretend to murmur and complain; not to mention the rude and passionate Behaviour of the Gentleman within Doors, who has deservedly fallen under the severest Displeasure of the House.

I will not recite those Dangers, that would inevitably have swallowed us up, if the Parliament had not contributed largely and chearfully to the publick Support: But still it is for Liberty, whose Price is inestimable, and an Inheritance, which once thoroughly establish'd, never failed to overpay the Purchase. And I dare appeal to the Consciences of all the reasonable Men in the Nation, if they would not have freely contributed more for our Safety and Deliverance, when we were

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were environ'd with Ruin, than we have either yet expended, or will be farther necessary to answer His MAJESTY'S Occasions. We have a frugal as well as prudent Prince to provide for, who desires to put us to no farther Charge than what will enable him to protect us. If, to effect our Recovery, and bring us to a perfect State of Health, will require Time and Cost, it is none of his Fault. He has endeavour'd, and is still endeavouring by his admirable Conduct, to cut the Work as short for us as possible. If His MAJESTY had any separate Interest from that of his People, we might part grudgingly with our Disbursements; but since he calls for no Supplies but what are indispensably necessary for our Preservation, and keeps up no Troops but for the Protection of his People, which are likewise lessen'd to such a Number, as will be no Burden to them; we ought as chearfully to contribute to his Support, as the Dutch to the maintaining of their Moundings, that bank out the Sea from overwhelming them.

Go on then, Great Sir, in the perfecting of that which Your MAJESTY hath so gloriously begun and undertaken, to the Joy of Your loyal and faithful Subjects, to the Despair and Confusion of Your Enemies, to the Security of the Protestant World. Your MAJESTY hath the Hearts, the Hands, the Purses of Your People at Your Devotion: You have a Parliament, who having engag'd whatsoever is worthy of Men of Honour, of Fortune, or Religion, for Your Assistance, will never be wanting to enable You to complete Yours, Theirs, Ours, nay Europe's Happiness. You have the greatest Security of the Protection of that God, who is the Disposer of Kingdoms, by whom Kings reign, who hath hitherto blessed You with Success to a Miracle. You have, in fine, the best and most glorious Cause, even the preserving of these Nations from all the Calamities that could befall either the Souls, Bodies, or Fortunes of Us and our Posterity. This I am sure is the hearty Prayer of all that are Lovers either of our Civil or Religious Rights, and our secure, peaceable, and lasting Enjoyment of them, That Your Enemies may be clothed with Shame, but upon Your Head the Crown may long flourish.

F I N I S.

